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In This Issue:

EDITORIAL: From Columbus To New World Order; FROM OTHER SOURCES: Chemical Hazards In African Communities, War Protesters Acquitted, Mask Of Anti-"Semitism" Removed, Beauty Of African Women; SPECIAL FEATURE: "Black History" Quiz; BOOK REVIEWS: Book Of The Living Dead, Dangerous Memories; ...

EDITORIAL

Here it is, 1992. In 1991, we saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the U.S. blitzkrieg-war against Iraq. In 1992, we will witness celebrations of and protests against the 500th anniversary of Columbus' stumbling into the Americas. The "discovery" of America, along with other events and developments, began a many-centuries-long race among Europeans for world dominance, culminating in the carving up of much of the world into European colonial enclaves. From the time of Columbus through the 1st world war, this race among European nations was essentially a free-for-all in which these nations(including the U.S) not only battled against the indigenous peoples of the lands they were colonizing - and attempting to colonize - but battled against each other over the material riches and human resources(those to be enslaved).

The Russian revolution of 1917 was a major force in the alligning of the Western powers into ideological blocs. World War II further "refined" this process, lifting the United States(of Occupied America) and the Soviet Union from the bloody tag-team match to positions of more or less supreme military power. The development of nuclear weapons cemented these two nations' positions, giving secondary status to previous world powers (Britain, France, Germany, etc.). Ultimately, most of the world became either junior partners or mere clients of either the U.S. or the Soviet Union. The coming to power of "communist" China altered the power equation somewhat, giving small countries a third option as to their political alignments. But, in short, the world of power relationships was a world of East vs. West, "communism" vs. capitalism.

Though the cold war that developed between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and these nations' huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons, did put the entire world at risk of destruction, the existence of that war and the fact that the two big Caucasian

bullies in the international neighborhood saw themselves as actual enemies(not just rivals) actually served to protect the sovereignty of small and/or militarily weak nations of Africa, the Mideast, Central and South America, and elsewhere. Even though these small and/or militarily weak nations were often used as pawns in super-power games, the fact is that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had to be wary of making overt military moves against countries outside of their respective "spheres of influence." Each had to be wary because of the potential for counter-moves on the part of the other. And because of the relative equality of strength on the parts of these two Goliaths, they frequently stalemated each other on the game-board of imperial designs. To some extent, the People's Republic of China played as a major piece on this board of international power relationships.

In this cold-war climate, small and/or militarily weak nations could barter their allegiances to one or other of the big powers in exchange for grants, interest-free loans, technical assistance, military protection against enemies, etc. In so doing, they were often also bartering away their independence. But on a playing field where there are both the powerful and the weak, the weak must improvise.

With the movement from East/West antagonism to "detente" and from "detente" to relative partnership between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R, the protection given small and/or militarily weak nations by the existence of the cold war began to fall away. With the significant weakening of the Soviet Union due to internal turmoil, the process of this eroding of protection was speeded up. The Bush Administration understood this clearly as it began its tough talk about Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. With the tough talk, followed by its sending military forces to Saudi Arabia, Bush and his gang were testing the Soviet Union. When they heard the weakness in Gorbachev's protestations, Bush and the gang felt confident that the U.S. could use Iraq as a clear notice to the world that it was THE super-power and and give its high-tech war toys the acid test.

The world today, then, is not the world of even two years ago. Cuba, with an African population of around sixty percent, may be more a likely candidate for U.S. invasion than it has ever been since its revolution. Libya remains a popular object of U.S. government bad-mouthing and a potential recipient of actual and overt military attack. Azanian liberation forces, and pseudo-liberation forces, once they give up the absurd belief that their country is just going to be turned over to them by the Europeans who run it and they move from talking to fighting, are going to be vulnerable. Obviously, they will face the police and military power of the "South African" government. But because that country has uranium and other minerals that the U.S. considers to be tied to ITS vital interests, those liberation forces will face the real possibility of U.S. intervention against them, either overt or clandestine. What about the African populations of Brazil, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and else where in the Western hemisphere who are and/or will be struggling for liberation?

Confident that, with the break-up of the Soviet Union, no nation stands in its way, the U.S. government may now feel it is free to escalate its acts of hostility against Cuba from economic blockade and other low-key measures to outright military attack. Should the pro-independence movement in Puerto Rico gain substantial and visible ground, Uncle Sam could see fit to apply his boot.

During the civil and human rights movements in the '60s U.S., one of the circumstances, aside from that of domestic turmoil, that led to the government's making of concessions was international opinion. More concretely, the opinion of the Soviet Union and that of those many African nations that had emerged, or were emerging, from colonialism; and, also, the opinions of the world at large with respect to U.S. power and status relative to the Soviet Union. The U.S. simply could not afford to be seen as overtly oppressive to its large African population while trying, at the same time,

to paint a picture of the Soviet Union as the epitome of evil and treachery in the world.

With African nations throwing off or being released from the shackles of official colonial servitude to the nations of Europe, the United States of (Occupied)America saw an opportunity to expand its political and military "influence" and further extend the country's commercial enterprises. In the eyes of U.S. government officials and business men, Africa was prime territory for U.S. military bases to counter the "Soviet threat" and for both raw materials for U.S. corporations and markets for their products. These considerations forced the U.S. to at least make it appear that "its negroes" were making progress.

In this, the year of the 500th anniversary of the so-called "discovery" of the Americas, African people in the U.S. find ourselves in the predicament of being unnecessary insofar as our labor is concerned and, as always, unwanted insofar as our humanity is concerned. With the Soviet Union having essentially ceased to exist and the nations of Africa being, for the most part, in a weak economic state and lacking any kind of intra-continental political unity, those who exercise power in the U.S. could very well be viewing the African population here as Columbus, Cortez, and other European "civilizers" viewed the indigenous populations--as <u>expendable</u>. This anniversary is an important one for us, not to be celebrating, but to be used for remembering. We must recollect what these past 500 years have done to us and seek understanding of the impact and significance of those years. Doing so, we will be struck by the urgency of our present-day situation and realize that we cannot afford our complacency and cannot afford to put off any longer the creation of a <u>concrete</u> pan-Africanism. We are in danger. And the danger does not sleep.

-Editor

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinctions between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to Africans are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(p.k.a. D. Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 1200 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. Submitted poems should not sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68542-2500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

African Communities Sites Of Chemical Hazards

"...State legislators(in New York) and officials are beginning to look at inner-city health issues as an environmental concern. The State Assembly's Environmental Conservation Committee held hearings last fall, co-sponsored by the Legislature's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, on such problems as lead poisoning, garbage incinerators and hazardous waste sites...

"'We found that there is almost a concerted pattern, evidently, of placing undesirable environmental facilities in low-income communities', said state Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Saugerties, who chairs the Environmental Conservation Committee. 'That's true in New York City and in parts of the upstate areas as well'...

"'But we also found that there are substantial environmental impacts in low-income communities from other aspects of the environment, such as the presence of lead from lead paint and the accumulation of lead in the ground from automobile and truck traffic', he told the Guardian...

"The lawmakers also heard testimony indicating that pollution exacerbates asthma and other respiratory ailments in the inner cities. New York City, for example, has tended to put most of its bus depots in low-income and minority neighborhoods, where idling buses pollute the immediate surroundings.

"African-Americans suffer from asthma at a rate twice as high as any other population group, Hinchey says. And respiratory disease is responsible for three times as many deaths among Blacks and Hispanics..."

-from "'Environmental Equity' A Base For New Coalitions," page 3, Jan. 8 THE GUARDIAN (N.Y.)

African War Protesters Acquitted Of Assault Charge

"Three Black protesters were acquitted Dec. 20 after a five-week trial in New York City on charges of assaulting police officers, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct during a demonstration against the impending Gulf war in October 1990.

"The three, David Ransom, Shahid Hashaba, 54, and Mustafa Ali Hassan, 51, charge that police assaulted them during the demonstration and also beat them while they were in custody. Hashaba and Hassan, both veterans, have filed brutality charges and civil suits against the police. ...

"They were part of a group of about 150 people who marched downtown from Harlem to join the main demonstration, according to Hashaba...

"Hashaba said that he was yoked around the neck and his arms pinned behind his back as dozens of cops swooped down on them. Hassan and Ransom were knocked to the ground...

"Jurors interviewed after the trial said videotapes and photographs introduced by the defense persuaded them to acquit the three."

-from "Black Gulf War Protesters Acquitted In N.Y.," page 5, Jan. 15 THE GUARDIAN

Mask Of Anti-"Semitism" Removed By N.Y. Workshop

"Since the disturbances in Crown Heights last summer that drove a wedge between the Hasidic Jews and the Black community, a group of community leaders has been working...to bring peace and harmony with justice to Black/Jewish relations in New York.

"To date, the Black-Jewish Workshop..,has had 18 weekly meetings... on such critical issues as documenting the White privilege and preferential

treatment enjoyed by the organized forces of the Hasidic community; looking at and exposing institutional racism; challenging media bias around racism and White control; and the need to have an all-civilian independent review board to deal with the double standards of the criminal justice system...

"...Unlike past groups of this kind, the workshop has taken very precise steps to clarify and respect each other's unique perspectives and cultural backgrounds...

"...the group has decided against using the term 'anti-Semitism', which it feels is inappropriate in describing the hostility against Jews. 'Semites are those people who speak, or whose ancestors spoke, Semitic languages--those languages which predominate in the Middle East, such as Hebrew and Arabic'. The group has opted to use the term 'anti-Jewish hostility', rather than anti-Semitism..."

-from "100 Black and Jewish Community Leaders Seeking Common Ground," page 4, Jan. 4 THE NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

Natural Beauty Of African Women Celebrated

"Beauticians greeted Naturally '62 almost like Hollywood greeted video--with fangs bared.

"When the Brathwaite brothers, Elombe Brath and Kwame Brathwaite, and their AJASS colleagues: Chris Acemandese Hall, Jimmy Abu, Frank Adu, Robert Gumbs and Lee Roy Giles, started promoting the natural beauty of the African woman and her crowning glory, the uptown beauty parlor operators saw this as a plot to put them out of business.

"Sunday, Jan. 26, 5 to 11 p.m., when Naturally '92 takes over Brooklyn's Golden Pavilion..., the AJASS braintrusters will be celebrating their

30th anniversary and three decades in the blossoming of Black pride...

"Feeling that today needs a rekindling of this race pride engendered by these early 'Naturally' shows, AJASS thinks Naturally '92 is necessary.

"'With the mood today, with people like Michael Jackson not known whether they're Black or White, and performers like 2 Live Crew and others disrespecting sisters, we feel we have to give direction to our youth', said Kwame Brathwaite 'and bring back dignity and respect to our Black women'..."

-from "Naturally '92 Reminds Us That Black Is Still Beautiful," page 19, Jan. 11 THE NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

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Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68542-2500

A Salute to all Gang Bangers

The following editorial is a reprint of a letter whose author is unknown. This letter has been circulating in the states of Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas for several months. It started to appear in the Omaha Public Schools and in the Black community three weeks ago. The editorial staff of the Metro Star felt its content and availability should be shared with our readers.

The Ku Klux Klan would like to take this time to salute and congratulate all Gang Bangers for the slaughter of over 4,000 Black people since 1975.

You are doing a marvelous job! Keep killing each other for nothing. The streets are still not yours, N-----. It is ours. You are killing each other for our property.

You are killing what could be future Black doctors, lawyers, and businessmen that we won't have to compete with; and the good thing about it is that you are killing the youth. So now we won't have to worry about you N------ in generations to come. We would further like to thank all the judges who have ever-sentenced those N----- to prison.

We are winning again. Pretty soon we will be able to go back to raping your women because all the men will be gone.

So you Gang Bangers...Keep up the good work. We love to read about the drive-by shootings. We love to hear how many N------ get killed over the weekends. We can tolerate the N------ with Jungle Fever (for now)...because that further breaks down your race.

To all Gang Bangers across the world. We don't love you N------, but we can appreciate your Gang Bangers. You are doing a wonderful job in eliminating the Black race.

Without the men, your women cannot reproduce...unless of course, we do it for them. Then we will have successfully eliminated a race thanks to your help and commitment to killing each other.

If most of you N----- Gang Bangers cannot read this letter, it is OK. Go pull a trigger and kill a N-----!!!

Thank-you

BLACK HISTORY QUIZ

1- Night is often described as being what color?

2- What basketball player is given credit for popularizing the wearing of black basketball shoes?

3- In what year was black shoe polish invented?

4- What common black sticky substance is used in roofing?

5- Do the good guys or bad guys wear black hats?

6- Where is Black Land?

.....

Next month, we will be presenting our annual African History edition of the FLAME. Folks who speak of "black" history frequently limit their historical people and events to the space and time boundaries of the U.S., as if African people in this country could somehow have had a history in isolation from African people in Africa and elsewhere. We are one people, with one history.

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOK OF THE LIVING DEAD: ESSAYS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN AWARENESS by Hassan Omowale

BOOK OF THE LIVING DEAD runs 147 pages (excluding index and bibliography) and is comprised of thirteen essays covering such topics as: Re-educating the African-American Mind; The Myth Of The White Jesus; The Good, The Bad, And The Black Press; And The Criminal System Of Criminal Justice. The author states, in the preface to BOOK OF THE LIVING DEAD, that "Black people's unique experience with slavery...is the cause of the vast majority of our problems today." Thus, he views the situation of African people in the U.S. as having certain fundamental components that are unique and that call for unique, or special, resolution.

Omowale's essays offer analysis of and commentary on various aspects of our situation and, in so doing, make use of quoted passages by such spokespersons and writers as: Yosef ben-Jochannan, Na'im Akbar, Maulana Ron Karenga, et al. While these quoted passages are helpful and, often, enlightening, they are too extensively used for Omowale's own ideas to be expressed in adequately developed fashion. For example, his essay, "Re-educating The African-American Mind," is comprised of fifteen pages, approximately a third of them taken up by quoted passages. Not only does this leave inadequate space for Omowale's ideas but leaves only three pages for addressing the question of how the "re-education" is going to be brought about.

Though BOOK OF THE LIVING DEAD does not provide, generally speaking, intense analysis, it does serve to establish a foundation upon which a reader can begin the process of constructing for him or herself an African consciousness. By introducing the reader to the ideas of persons such as ben-Jochannan, Karenga, and others, Omowale leads the reader to construction materials by which this consciousness can become more fully developed.

DANGEROUS MEMORIES: INVASIONS AND RESISTANCE SINCE 1492 by Chicago Religious Task Force On Central America

As the title suggests, this book is a historical work that chronicles the event of the "discovery" of the Americas and the impact of that event upon the subsequent histories of the peoples of the Americas, Africa, and Europe. DANGEROUS MEMORIES is divided into three chapters: The Invasion, Resistance, and Culture. In addition, it includes a section, "Teaching Strategies," which offers very useful guidance in the teaching of the material covered in the chapters.

DANGEROUS MEMORIES begins its historic journey by giving us an insightful look at Europe at the time of Columbus' voyage and the social, economic, and other forces which led to European exploration to and invasions of other lands. It also describes the cultures of the populations of the Americas. As a result, the reader is enabled to see the hows and whys of initial contact between Europe and the Americas and the cultural and other dynamics which led to the annihilation and near-annihilation by Europeans of many of the Americas' indigenous populations, the introduction of slavery as a color-based institution, etc.

The authors of DANGEROUS MEMORIES make use of a novel format in which pages of the text are divided into two columns, one giving contemporary narrative and the other giving commentary from other sources. These other sources are frequently persons who lived at the time of the event or development being described. For instance, in a section on resistance in 18th-century San Domingo, an excerpt from a letter written by Toussaint Breda (L'Ouverture) is offered. While this format takes a little getting used to, it helps place the reader "right in the midst of the action," so to speak.

One weakness in this book is its failure to provide an adequate picture, as it does in the cases

(Cont. on page 16)

BACK IN TIME

It was the boredom of small-town life that led six young Confederate veterans to gather around a fireplace one December evening in 1865 and to form a social club. The place was Pulaski, Tenn., near the Alabama border.

When they reassembled a week later, the six young men were full of ideas for their new society. It would be secret, to heighten the amusement of the thing, and the titles for the various offices were to have names as preposterous-sounding as possible, partly for the fun of it and partly to avoid any military or political implications. Thus the head of the group was called the Grand Cyclops, his assistant was the Grand Magi; there was to be a Grand Turk to greet all candidates for admission, a Grand Scribe to act as secretary, Night Hawks for messengers and a Lictor to be the guard. The members, when the six young men found some to join, would be called Ghouls. But what to name the society itself? The founders were determined to come up with something unusual and mysterious. Being well-educated, they turned to Greek. After tossing around a number of ideas, Richard R. Reed suggested the word "kuklos," from which the English words "circle" and "cycle" are derived. Another member, Capt. John B. Kennedy, had an ear for alliteration and added the word "clan." After tinkering with the sound for a while they settled on Ku Klux Klan.

Source: THE KU KLUX KLAN: A HISTORY OF RACISM AND VIOLENCE, Second Edition(1986), by Southern Poverty Law Center

Europe and the Americas, of the African continent at the time of the European invasions. Despite this weakness, though, DANGEROUS MEMORIES is a very important book. It is important for a number of reasons, among the most important of which are: It gives the indigenous people of the Americas and Africans in this hemisphere a sense of the wealth of their/our ancestors' cultures and the depth of their resolve to overcome oppression; and by showing the fundamental cultural commonalities between the two groups, it establishes a sound rationale, aside from the matter of our common oppression, unity among indigeous people and Africans today.

DANGEROUS MEMORIES is an appropriate title for this work because those who are kept under the power of others through illusion and deception are likely to be moved to resistance when exposed to the truth.

BOOK OF THE LIVING DEAD: ESSAYS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN AWARENESS

Amen-Ra Publishing Company
P.O. Box 3481
Columbus, OH 43210 (614) 444-4460

DANGEROUS MEMORIES: INVASIONS AND RESISTANCE SINCE 1492

C.R.T.F.O.C.A.
59 E. Van Buren
Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60605 (312) 663-4398